



[ERN: 00359813]

... (Chinese Hospital). I glanced along the road towards the east to look for the Memorial Tower (Independence Monument), which was located far away. I could see its tower in the blink of an eye as a truck passed it quickly. I secretly put my palms together as high as my chest and prayed silently, “May Grandma Penh (ព្រះព្រហ្ម), Dang Keu (ដងកើវ) God, Indra (Preah Ĭn) (ព្រះឥន្ទ្រ), Brahma (Preah Prum) (ព្រះព្រហ្ម) and all the guardian spirits of Phnom Penh inspire and assist Khmer strugglers to wipe the Fascist dictatorial regime of POL Pot, IENG Sary and KHIEU Samphan from Cambodia and liberate the people and the motherland from this evil and inhumane regime.”

Finally, our truck stopped in front of the Railway Station of Cambodia. *Angkar* cliques ordered the people to get off the truck and walk to board a train inside the station. When my family got to the train, I saw young girls aged between 15 and 18 years old wearing knee-length black skirts, black long-sleeved shirts and sandals with red and white striped scarfs around their necks.

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... I questioned an old lady who was lying with her legs and arms together and staring at me.

- I asked, "Staying here, are you bitten by bedbugs, *Ming*?"

- The old lady replied in a soft voice, "Yes, of course."

- I further asked her, "What illness are you suffering from?"

- She replied, while she was getting up and leaning her back against the wall, "I suffer from frailty."

- She added, "During the last rainy season ..." Not finishing her sentence, the old lady looked frightened and stared at me. She stopped telling her story and asked me carefully,

"At which worksite are you working, Comrade?"

I seemed to understand her mind as she surly was unnerved by my questions and clothes. I hurriedly informed her of my reasons.

- "Hmm, *Ming*, I have been sent from the East Zone by *Angkar*, and now (*Angkar*) has assigned me to work at the Thnal Dàb Preah Noreay (ផ្ទះដំបូងនរាយណ៍) Worksite, but now I have cut my hand with a sickle."

- She listened and nodded her head. She continued relating her history, saying she was an evacuee (a '17 April person') from Kandal (កណ្តាល) Province. Now,

Angkar has called them (the '17 April people') the '18 April people' (18) instead. At the time, in 1976, *Angkar* declared they would help transport any '17 April' families who had been evacuated from the cities by *Angkar* on "Liberation Day" and who had not returned to their hometowns or places where they wanted to go. Since that day,

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thousands or tens of thousands of '17 April' families have been transported by *Angkar* to the Northwest Zone. In fact, they were not transported to their homelands as announced by *Angkar*.

'18 April' families were taken there and overworked without [enough] food. As a consequence, many of them have died. In addition, *Angkar* has accused them of being 'traitors' to *Angkar*, and nearly all of them at each worksite have been taken for execution. The old lady further told me that, during the 1978 rainy season, a very painful thing happened which made her lose her beloved husband and five children. She herself became physically ill and has stayed at this hospital until today. The old lady added that, when the rainy season came, *Angkar* reduced the amount of milled rice distributed to the communal dining hall.

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Her husband was accused of betraying the cooperative and *Angkar*, arrested and executed. He had stolen collective potatoes from the cooperative to relieve his hunger. She later learned that her eldest daughter and two sons had also died at the Damnak Sokr (ដំណាក់ស្ករ) Dam worksite, and she had not seen her children before they died.

Her three other children also died tragically from starvation in the village, and their corpses were taken away to be buried like animals.

After her husband and all her children had died, she became so seriously ill that she [just] lay in one place. She told me that, if she had stayed alone in that village, she would have suffered the same fate as that of her children and the other villagers who had died like animals. Therefore, she asked permission from *Angkar* to stay at this hospital until the present. When she first arrived, the hospital was crowded with patients. Each room was crowded with patients. Unfortunately, over the last several months, most patients were not recovering to return to their bases or worksites.

Some of them died of starvation, and some others were executed as a result of accusations made by medical staff (*Angkar*).

Those medical staff (*Angkar*) executed the patients who were regarded as traitors to the cooperatives and *Angkar* by injecting water into their bodies. She added that the gruel ration at the hospital was the same as that in the village. As a consequence, patients had to collect and eat leaves, edible plants, potatoes and etc. to

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relieve their hunger. This caused the patients to have swollen bodies and dysentery and later die.

Ming Chea (ឆី) (the old lady) said in tears that *Angkar* was very brutal. They (*Angkar*) said, “The patients are lazy, sleeping without doing any work, “If you are kept, no gain. If you are pulled out, no loss!” She told me, in case I did not believe what she said, take a walk and check around the village and the bushes near this hospital, and you will see many mass graves of patients who had either died or been executed by *Angkar*.

Finally, the old lady told me to look at the condition of the room